

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite; and rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kumar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,006,253) in view of Pepper et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,930,700) and Wong (U.S. Patent No. 6,185,288 B1). Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim what Applicants regard as the invention. In particular, the Examiner alleged that it is not clear in claim 1 how a plurality of incoming calls are simultaneously transmitted to a selected terminal. Claim 1 does not recite that a plurality of incoming calls are simultaneously transmitted to a selected terminal. Instead, claim 1 recites that a plurality of "line appearance signals that identify origins of the incoming calls" are simultaneously transmitted to a selected terminal. Applicants specification provides ample support for this feature (e.g., see page 9, lines 2-6). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over a combination of Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong. With regard to independent claim 1, for example, the Examiner alleged that the combination of Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong discloses the invention substantially as claimed. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Kumar et al. discloses an H.323 system that provides a back-channel for receiver terminals in a loosely-coupled conference (col. 2, lines 46-63; Fig. 1). Pepper et al. discloses a system that allows a subscriber to have incoming telephone calls screened to identify those calls that are of the highest importance to the subscriber (col. 4, lines 62-65). Wong discloses a generic signaling system that permits a caller using a wireline, wireless, or H.323 terminal to connect to a called terminal (Abstract).

By contrast, the present invention recited in independent claim 1, for example, includes a combination of features, including a gateway and a signal routing agent. The gateway communicates with a switched circuit network and translates switched circuit network-compatible signals into computer network-compatible signals. The signal routing agent communicates with the gateway and with one or more terminals. The signal routing agent receives plural incoming calls from the gateway addressed to a selected one of the terminals and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify origins of the incoming calls to the selected terminal.

Neither Kumar et al., Pepper et al., nor Wong, whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests this claimed combination of features. Among other things, none of the references, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives plural incoming calls and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of the incoming calls to a selected terminal.

The Examiner admitted that Kumar et al. does not disclose a signal routing agent that simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of incoming calls to the selected terminal (Office Action, page 3). The Examiner alleged that Pepper et al.

discloses "transmit[ting] appearance signals to the screen of the PDA 200 via a graphical user interface (GUI)" (Office Action, page 3). In the last Office Action, dated October 25, 2000, the Examiner admitted that Pepper et al. does not disclose that plural incoming calls are simultaneously transmitted to the selected terminal (Office Action, dated October 25, 2000, at page 3).

The Examiner seemingly relied upon the newly applied Wong reference for disclosing this feature. The Examiner made no assertion, however, that Wong cures the deficiencies in the disclosures of Kumar et al. and Pepper et al. In fact, the Examiner did not cite any reference that discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives plural incoming calls addressed to a selected terminal and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of the incoming calls to the selected terminal. As such, the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) with regard to claim 1 is, therefore, improper and should be withdrawn.

In addition, the Examiner has not explained how and why one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicants' invention would combine the various features of Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong. Indeed, Applicants believe that it would not be reasonable to combine features of a system that provides a back-channel for receiver terminals in a loosely-coupled conference (Kumar et al.) with a system for automatically screening and directing calls (Pepper et al.) and a generic signaling system for performing call signaling for multimedia call setups (Wong).

The only apparent motivation for combining the references is found in Applicants' own disclosure which, of course, may not properly be relied upon to support the ultimate legal conclusion of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Absent such impermissible hindsight

reasoning, one of ordinary skill in the art, having the Kumar et al. reference, would not have been motivated to modify the reference in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Further, none of these references even suggests the modification of references set forth by the Examiner. For example, Pepper et al. provides no reason for combining the disclosed call screening system with the loosely-coupled conferencing system of Kumar et al. In addition, Wong provides no reason for combining a generic signaling system with either a loosely-coupled conferencing system or a call screening system. Therefore, the Examiner's combination of the references is improper.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong, whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1 and, therefore, are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 1.

Independent claim 9 recites a combination of features, including a signal routing agent, a gateway, and at least one gatekeeper. The gateway receives an incoming call and translates the call into computer network-compatible signals. The gatekeeper communicates with the gateway and in response to receipt of the incoming call, controls the gateway to transmit the computer network-compatible signals to the signal routing agent. The signal routing agent, in response to receipt of the computer network-compatible signals, identifies corresponding ones of the terminals assigned to receive the computer network-compatible signals and transmits line appearance messages that identify the origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals.

Neither Kumar et al., Pepper et al., nor Wong, whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests this claimed combination of features. Among other things,

none of the references, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives computer network-compatible signals corresponding to an incoming call, identifies corresponding terminals assigned to receive the signals, and transmits line appearance messages that identify the origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals.

Kumar et al. and Wong are silent with regard to this feature. Pepper et al. discloses routing a call to locations in the alternative only (col. 12, lines 7-67). In other words, Pepper et al. discloses "[d]epending on the subscriber's schedule and the caller's assigned priority, the caller may be connected directly to the subscriber at a telephone number listed in the appointment calendar or to the PDA 200 (if it has voice communications) or to any other predetermined call delivery address" (emphasis added) (col. 6, lines 37-42). Therefore, Pepper et al. fails to disclose a signal routing agent that transmits line appearance messages to multiple terminals addressed by an incoming call.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 9 is patentable over Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong, whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Claims 10-14 depend from claim 9 and, therefore, are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 9.

Independent claim 15 recites features similar to claims 1 and 9. For example, claim 15 recites "transmitting plural line appearance signals that identify origins of the incoming calls to each of the end-points." Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong do not disclose or suggest this feature. Claim 15 is, therefore, patentable over the cited references for reasons similar to those given with regard to claims 1 and 9. Claim 16 depends from claim 15 and, therefore, is patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 15.

Independent claim 17 recites features similar to claim 9. For example, claim 17 recites "identify[ing] corresponding ones of the terminals assigned to receive the computer network-compatible signals and [transmitting] line appearance messages that identify an origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals." Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong do not disclose this feature. Therefore, claim 17 is patentable over the cited references for reasons similar to those given with regard to claim 9. Claim 18 depends from claim 17 and, therefore, is patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 17.

Independent claim 19 recites a combination of features of a method for establishing an attendant/attendee relationship between plural terminal end-points via an H.323-based communication system. The method includes creating a configuration database storing attendant and attendee relationships between respective ones of the terminal end-points; receiving an incoming call addressed to a particular number; accessing the configuration database to determine if the number corresponds to an attendant or attendee terminal end-point; if the number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, transmitting a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call to the attendant terminal end-point; and if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, transmitting line appearances that identify the origin of the incoming call to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in the configuration database with the attendee.

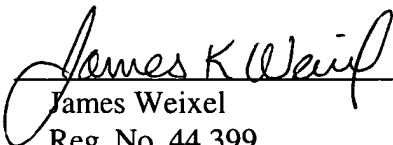
Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong are silent with regard to an attendant/attendee relationship where if a number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call is transmitted to the attendant terminal end-point, and if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, line appearances that identify

the origin of the incoming call are transmitted to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in a configuration database with the attendee. In the Office Action, the Examiner did not address these particular features.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 19 is patentable over Kumar et al., Pepper et al., and Wong, whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. If the rejection is maintained, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner specifically point to where these features are allegedly disclosed in the applied references.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and allowance of the pending claims.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 07-2339 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

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